527 these are Christmas, Shrove Tuesday, Easter and Midsummer, each one celebrated with its special forms of entertainment and traditional food. At Midsummer the rooms are decorated with fresh birch leaves, bonfires burn on the shores, and young people spend the short hours of the "nightless night" with song and dancing. The patterns of celebration are very much the same as in Scandinavia, although there are some differences, e. g. in the traditional dishes and decoration.

77/ Traditional beliefs and superstitions have little importance in the Finnish society of today, although the ancient poetry bears witness to an extraordinarily fertile imagination, the present-day Finns are apt to take a logical and practical view of most phenomena.

Annex "A," Subparagraph 1k,

Sociological Background

RELIGION

771 The ancient Finns evidently worshipped the spirits of their ancestors and the powers of nature, many of which were personified. All the same, they never had such a clearcut hierarchy of gods as their Scandinavian neighbors, nor did 782 they build any temples for their deities. The sacrificial ceremonies were conducted in sacred 769 glens, and trees were lopped to commemorate the dead, who otherwise might have proved 779 harmful for their surviving relatives. Roman 771 Catholicism, which was established in the country at the time of the Swedish conquest, did not penetrate very deeply into the consciousness of the people, especially so far as distant parts of Finland were concerned. The reformer of

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771 The reformer of
Finland, Bishop Michael Agricola, in one of his books gives a long list of deities worshipped by the Tavastians and the Karelians respectively, which shows that at the time (around 1550) pagan beliefs and practices were still well remem-

538 bered. The old epic poetry of the Finns displays an original mixture of pagan and Christian con-

ceptions, and many of the Bible stories and Christian legends are turned into charming

795 mythical ballads. All the same, the Catholic Church was an important influence in Finland both religiously and politically all through the

[793] Middle Ages. The bishops of Finland, mostly native Finns, were as a whole able and influential men who used their position in the council of the King to work selflessly for the benefit of their country and people.

795 771 The reformation was carried out in Finland without much controversy, and in 1593 Sweden-

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795 Finland officially adopted the Lutheran creed.
The bishops and ministers worked energetically for the uprooting of the pagan beliefs and succeeded in extinguishing the old poetry (which was supposed to have been inspired by the devil) 212 795 in the western parts of the country. The Lutheran Church attached much importance to the instruction of the people and it deserves credit [512] for effectively teaching the Finns to read. The ability to read and to write and a knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Church were made prerequisite for anyone wishing to enter matrimony, and slow readers were punished by being placed in stocks before the church on Sundays. Thus, in the western parts of the country, literacy was already quite common towards the end of the seventeenth century.

795 Even today the Lutheran Church holds by far

162	Baptists	2,138
	Methodists	2,107
	Jewish	1,535
	Roman Catholics	1,163
	Moslems	621
	Free Catholics	135
	Mormons	80
	Jehovah's Witnesses	26
	Anglicans	11

771 Since every child from birth is automatically categorized according to the belief of his parents, these numbers by no means indicate the percentage of active church membership. The majority consists of indifferent members, who go to church occasionally and who have the minister to officiate only at baptism, marriage and burial. There exist no statistics on regular church attendance, but it should be around 10

77 to 20 per cent of the population, with wide local deviations. It is to be remembered, however, that these numbers in Finland reflect circumstances different from those in Central Europe, 771 for example. The country is so sparsely popula- 369 ted that some people are as far away as 50 kilometers from the nearest church, with no modern means of communication at their disposal. These people prefer to listen to radio services instead. Most of the people in the cities too, and especially those who rarely go to church, listen regularly to Sunday services and daily prayer 771 hours on the radio. As a whole, religion and the churches have a much more profound influence on the Finns than is noticeable from superficial observation. Going to church here is not a social custom but a demonstration of personal religious need.

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[121] The Finns are often described as by nature re-
•771 ligious people, inclined to metaphysical medita-
tion, but at the same time calm and composed in
their demonstrations. Indeed, deep religiosity
still is characteristic of a considerable part of
the population. This has been nourished and sup-
ported by the great revival movements which
originated in the last century and still have a de-
cisive role in the religious life of Finland. They
all have had a remarkable national character and
have been little affected by influence from
abroad. The most important among these is the
so-called pietistic movement in the provinces of
Savo and Ostrobothnia. Although in the beginning
opposed by both State and Church, these move-
ments do not show any separatistic tendencies;
on the contrary, they stress the unity of the
church and adhere to the Lutheran doctrine, each

movement having its own interpretation of the doctrine. Now most of the ministers count themselves into one or another of these religious movements, which sometimes causes controversy in the congregations, since all the members do not hold the same views. A common feature for all these religious movements is the significance placed on personal religious life. The simple life and abstinence from "earthly" pleasures, including alcohol, dancing and cards, is required by them of anyone wanting to be a true Christian. But these followers with their strict religious beliefs also make good citizens with their high moral standards, their industry, and their interest in the affairs of country and community. Strong patriotism is characteristic of these people, who are by no means opposed to military service. On the contrary, the pietistic farmers

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771 in Ostrobothnia were actually the first to take arms at the outbreak of the Finnish War of Independence.

771 795 A study of the specific religious faiths does not reflect any ethnic differences. The majority of the Greek Catholics are to be found among the Karelians, formerly living in the eastern-most communities of Finland, and those in the Civil Register are predominantly city people, partly radical-minded intellectuals, partly workers with communist views. In many cases the reasons for leaving the Church have been economic, for those listed in the Civil Register are exempted from the taxes collected by the Church. The fact that despite this economic factor there has never been any mass movement away from the Church reflects the influence which the fathers' faith still has over the people.

795 the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. There are two dioceses, each headed by a bishop. Most of the Greek Catholic congregations were situated in the area ceded to Russia after World War II. Now their 70,000 members live scattered all over the country.

798 Thus the Finns represent a religiously uni-
791 form group. There have been no religious persecutions, no fights between different denominations. The absence of influential religious minorities has no doubt contributed to the fact that there is little religious fanaticism, and religious considerations hardly influence the national attitude towards foreign countries--except for those in which religion has been officially abandoned and persecuted. And, of course, a common religion is apt further to strengthen the ties that connect Finland with the Scandinavian states.